

Solent Forum Annual Report: 2022 - 2023

The Solent Forum is an established coastal partnership that promotes and delivers integrated coastal management around the Solent. Established in 1992, it provides advice on strategic coastal matters and facilitates communication and information exchange amongst its members. Its work is steered by a group of funding partners, who also guide the work of the Forum Officers.

This report sets out what the Forum has achieved in the 2022/23 financial year and what it will deliver in 2023/24. The long term aims and objectives of the Forum are set out in its [Business Plan](#).

The Forum has three categories of work that it undertakes; core work that is ongoing each year, specific project work that runs for a defined time period and the servicing of subgroups.

The Forum hosts regular events as part of its core service. It also organises other events, both alone and in partnership with others, to support project work and disseminate information on important Solent coastal issues.



Solent Forum Aims

The aims of the Solent Forum are:

- To promote, facilitate and support integrated planning and sustainable management of the Solent.
- To provide a broad based consultative forum.

Solent Forum Members

The Forum has a wide ranging membership from all coastal sectors. Members are professional bodies and organisations such as local government, harbour authorities, industry, user groups, trade associations and NGOs. The Forum is not open to individuals, local residents associations or issue specific lobby groups. It is politically neutral and independently chaired.

Membership benefits include:

- Access to the Solent News service;
- Free attendance at the biannual Solent Forum meetings and reduced entry fee to other Forum events;
- Access to Forum reports, data and the Forum's Solent Information Database;
- Use of the Solent Forum network to communicate with other authorities, organisations and user groups;
- Opportunity to undertake partnership work and influence the direction of future Forum project work;
- Opportunity to join Forum Subgroups: Natural Environment and Solent Marine Sites (Relevant Authorities) and apply for the Solent Bathing Water Quality Awards.
- Use the Forum network to assist with project work via letters of support, stakeholder engagement, joint event hosting and legacy outputs.



Solent Forum Objectives

The Forum's Business Plan monitors its progress against an agreed set of five objectives; this Plan sets out in detail how the Forum will deliver them. Below is a summary of the relevant work that the Forum undertakes to deliver its objectives:

1. To raise awareness and understanding of members' roles and aspirations

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Forum meetings.

2. To improve sharing of the information base

Relevant Forum work: Professor Mike Clark Award, Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Bathing Water Quality Awards, Solent Information Database and identification of research needs.

3. To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison:

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Forum meetings, topical workshops, Solent Information Database and Coastal Consents Guide.

4. To raise awareness and understanding of the human and natural changes likely to materially affect the Solent area and its interests:

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Forum meetings and Solent Forum serviced subgroups.

5. To promote the national and regional importance of the Solent in policy, development and plan making:

Relevant Forum work: Solent Forum Meetings, Solent News Service, Forum website, officer input into national coastal policy work, partnership working and strategic opportunities workshops.

6. To raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of Climate Change on the Solent and appropriate mitigation, resilience and adaptation measures:

Relevant Forum work: Solent Forum Meetings, Solent News Service, Forum websites and workshops.

Solent Forum Core Work

- Biannual [Forum meetings](#).
- News service - biannual newsletter, ([Solent News](#)) monthly updates, Twitter and special alerts.
- Maintaining the [Forum website](#), including hosting partner material.
- Provision of the [Solent Information Database \(SID\)](#) - a metadatabase of Solent research and reports.
- Servicing of subgroups.
- Administering the [Solent Bathing Water Quality Awards](#).
- Administering the [Professor Mike Clark Award](#) to support student research in the Solent. Hosting a placement student.
- Maintaining a [Coastal Consents Guide](#) to advise those wishing to undertake development.
- Membership networking and attendance at key local meetings like Catchment Partnerships and the Southern Coastal Group.
- Collating and sharing information on key issues with member organisations.
- Hosting of material and legacy support for external projects. Chairing external projects and facilitating workshops.

Solent Forum Subgroups

- [Solent Marine Sites Management Group](#) (Relevant Authorities only)
- [Solent Bathing Water Quality Group](#) (to administer bathing water quality awards)
- [Natural Environment Group](#)

Work Programme 2022/23

Meetings and Events Held in 2022/23

Meeting	Attendees	Date of Meeting/Event
Solent Forum	Solent Forum members	Autumn 2022 and Spring 2023
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Autumn 2022 and Spring 2023
Solent Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Management Group	Activity survey in Spring 2022, Management Group meeting in Autumn 2022
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	NEG Members	Spring and Autumn 2022
Horizon Scanning (online survey)	Solent Forum Members	Summer 2022
Marine nature recovery scoping	LNRS Responsible Authorities	Regular meetings held throughout 2022/23

Projects/Partnership Work Undertaken in 2022/23

Project/Service	Objective	Details
Solent Forum - Beneficial Use of Dredging in the Solent Project (BUDS)	Explores how dredgings can be used in coastal defence and habitat replenishment schemes.	Final reporting for Phase 3, bottom placement dredging at Lymington, including consents. Work for proposed top placement of dredgings for BUDS phase 4.
Building Biodiversity in the Solent Hub	Develop a resource hub on building biodiversity, including ecological enhancement.	The Forum continued to collate and share further knowledge on this topic. We attended an Ecostructure workshop.
Habitat Restoration hub	Collate information on habitat restoration, including on natural capital, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and net gain.	Information was shared via our news service and website. We supported organisations undertaking restoration work.
Clean Solent Shores and Seas (CSSS)	CSSS collates and shares information on a range of topics to help improve the Solent's water quality.	We continued populating the directories under the CSSS umbrella and supporting Southern Water's technical summit.
Solent Plastics Pollution Hub (SPP) SPP facebook page	SPP collates and publicises work on reducing litter and preventing plastic pollution in the Solent.	We continued to work with the Environment Agency on this Interegg funded project until March 2023.
Habitat Restoration Inventory for the Solent to Sussex Bay	Working with University of Portsmouth to raise awareness and encourage partnership working on habitat restoration.	Project commenced Jan 2023, we have been supporting project partners to develop a survey and look at how data is presented.
Solent Marine Invasive Species and Biosecurity Planning	To raise awareness of marine invasive species amongst Solent stakeholders and help them to adopt biosecurity measures.	Project commenced Jan 2023. Workshops will be held throughout the Solent and the resources developed placed on a biosecurity web hub on our site.

Solent Forum Work Programme 2023/24

Key Meetings and Events Planned for 2023/24

Meeting	Attendees	Date of Meeting/Event
Solent Forum	Solent Forum members	Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024
Solent Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Management Group	Survey of activities spring 2023, annual meeting Autumn 2023
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	NEG Members	Spring and Autumn 2023
Horizon Scanning survey	Solent Forum members	Summer 2023
Marine nature recovery scoping	LNRS Responsible Authorities	Regular meetings to be held through 2023/24 as LNRS progress

Projects/Consultancy Services Planned for 2023/24

Project/Service	Objective	Work Programme for 2023/4
Solent Plastics Pollution Hub (SPP) SPP facebook page	SPP is an information hub to collate and publicise all the work taking place around the Solent and its associated river catchments on reducing litter and preventing plastic pollution.	The Preventing Plastic Pollution project that launched SPP ended in March 2023. SPP resources will be maintained for the next five years, to 2028, by the Solent Forum.
Building Biodiversity in the Solent Hub	An ongoing project to develop a resource hub on building biodiversity into coastal infrastructure, including ecological enhancement.	A web page of resources has been built and information and case studies continue to be added. We will attend the Ecostructure national working group that has been established.
Beneficial Use of Dredgings (BUDS) in the Solent	To explore how material from dredging that takes place in the Solent can be used in coastal defence and habitat replenishment schemes.	During this year we will help to progress funding requests for phase 4 (top placement of dredgings at Lymington). We will also promote lessons learnt to replicate further work.
Clean Solent Shores and Seas (CSSS)	CSSS collates and shares information on a range of water quality topics in the Solent.	A signposting and resource hub has been established on the Forum's website and will continue to be populated in 2023/4.
Habitat Restoration Inventory for the Solent to Sussex Bay	Working with University of Portsmouth to raise awareness and encourage partnership working on habitat restoration.	Project commenced Jan 2023, the inventory will be linked to the Forum's website in late spring 2023.
Solent Marine Invasive Species and Biosecurity Planning	To raise awareness of marine invasive species amongst Solent stakeholders and help them to adopt biosecurity measures.	Project commenced Jan 2023. Workshops were held in March 2023 with a second set planned for June. The resources developed will be placed on a new biosecurity web hub on the Forum's website.
Sea the Value (Developing the economics of biodiversity)	Communities and organisations will be engaged in mapping values and trade-offs, and co-developing green investments for marine biodiversity.	The Solent is one of two project field sites and we will be supporting the project team until 2025.
Solent Seascapes	A Blue Marine Foundation led project to restore and reconnect seagrass meadows, oyster reefs, saltmarsh and seabird nesting habitat over the next five years (2023 to 2028).	Member of the project Steering Group and chair of the Seascapes Recovery Plan Working Group. This group will commission work to produce pressure mapping and will also deliver the Natural Environment Group Bird Sensitivity and Activity Mapping Project.